

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /030 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5622

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT VIA POUCH

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ASAF, YE

SUBJECT: YEMEN AIRLINES SAFETY

BEIRUT FOR RCAA AND FAA

REF: STATE 117556

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: OVERALL YEMEN AIR MAINTENANCE ANDHIFIFETY
APPEAR MODERATELY SATISFACTORFIOVER PERIOD OF LAST FIVE YEARS,
BUT STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES USED ARE MORE EXACTING ON
FOREIGN ROUTINGS THAN ON DOMESTIC ONES. YEMEN AIR'S FLEET
AT MOMENT CONSISTS OF ONE DC-3 AND ONE DC-6, PLUS THE WET-
LEASED BOEING 737 BEING FLOWN AND MAINTAINED BY BRITANNIA AIR
CREW. ONE INDICATION OF AIRLINE'S EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE PLIGHT
IS CURRENT NON-OPERATIONAL STATUS OF AIRLINE'S SECOND DC-6 AND
DC-3. AIRLINE HAS HAD FOUR CRASHES AND TWO HIJACKINGS IN LAST
FIVE YEARS. NO PASSENGER DEATHS WERE RECORDED, ALTHOUGH
THERE HAVE BEEN CREW FATALITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. MAINTENANCE. AT PRESENT YEMEN AIR HAS NEITHER THE
FACILITIES NOR THE TRAINED PERSONNEL TO PERFORM MORE THAN BASIC
MAINTENANCE ON ITS PROP AIRCRAFT AND AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE
STANDARDS ARE PROBABLY INADEQUATE TO ENSURE PROPER FUNCTIONING
OF FLIGHT EQUIPMENT. EXCEPTION IS THE LEASED BOEING WHICH,
ALONG WITH ITS BRITISH CREW, LARGELY PROVIDES THE AIRLINE'S
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BACKBONE AND IS OPERATED AT A CONTINUING HIGH STANDARD. THE

BOEING IS REGULARLY SERVICED ABROAD. PENDING COMPLETIONS OF HANGER FACILITIES AT SANA AND APPROPRIATE TRAINING FOR GROUND CREWS, MAINTENANCE FOR PROP CREWS WILL REMAIN INADEQUATE. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL HAS NOT YET DEVELOPED ALTHOUGH AIRCRAFT VOLUME REMAINS SMALL. RADIO BEACONS ARE IN OPERATION AND A VOR SYSTEM IS AVAILABLE.

3. SAFETY CONSCIOUSNESS. BOTH YARG AND YEMEN AIR ARE SHOWING INCREASED ATTENTION TOWARD AIRLINE SAFETY BUT CONSIDERABLE WORK IS NEEDED IN THIS AREA. SAFETY STANDARDS ARE STILL NOT FORMALIZED, AND AN OVERALL OPERATIONS MANUAL IS STILL LACKING. FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE AT SANA AIRPORT. RUNWAYS AT OUTLYING AIRPORTS (PARTICULARLY TAIZ AND HODEIDA) ARE NOT PROPERLY MAINTAINED, ALTHOUGH SERVICE IS NOT AS HEAVY AS AT SANA WHERE ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE DOES EXIST. YEMEN IS A SIGNATORY TO ICAO CONVENTION AND IS AWARE OF ITS SAFETY OBLIGATIONS. WITH ASSIST FROM ICAO ADVISORS, IMPLEMENTATION IS GRADUALLY TAKING PLACE BUT AT A SLOW PACE.

4. ACCIDENT RECORD: IN LAST FOUR YEARS, YEMEN AIR HAS HAD FOUR MAJOR ACCIDENTS--ALL INVOLVING DC-3S. LATEST ACCIDENTS AT BAIDA (1974) AND SANA (1973) CAUSED NO FATALITIES. THIRD ACCIDENT IN YUGOSLAVIA IN 1972 RESULTED IN FIVE DEATHS. PLANE WAS RETURNING TO YAR WITH DC-3 ENGINE AT THE TIME. FOURTH ACCIDENT AT TAIZ (1971) RESULTED IN PILOT'S DEATH. YEMEN AIR HAS ADDITIONALLY HAD ONE INTERNATIONAL (1973) AND ONE DOMESTIC HIJACKING (1975), NEITHER OF WHICH CAUSED ANY INJURIES. YEMEN AIR USUALLY DOES NOT SCREEN ITS PASSENGERS, AND THE WEAPONS NORMALLY CARRIED BY MANY YEMENIS (DAGGERS AND REVOLVERS) ARE GENERALLY PRESENT ON MOST DOMESTIC FLIGHTS. AN EXCEPTION IS MADE IN THE CASE OF THE LEASED BOEING WHERE ALL STANDARDS -- INCLUDING PASSENGER INSPECTION--ARE MUCH MORE RIGOROUS.

5. FOR THE RECORD, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING SOURCE OF REFERENCED INQUIRY IF DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTIONS.
SCOTES

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